**Purpose and General Principles**

“Language plays a vital role in the construction of meaning.” (IBO, Language Scope and Sequence, 2018, p.1) Language connects us all as a community of learners through its impact on our interactions, relationships, and self-expression. Language is also the major connecting element across all curriculum. In order for learning to take place, it involves language acquisition through listening, thinking, discourse, and reflection of information, ideas, and issues. It is to this end, that all teachers at Morris Brandon Elementary are considered language teachers – each teacher has a responsibility to help students develop language in order for students to interact with the knowledge, key concepts, skills, the Learner Profile, and approaches to learning. It is through language that students will become more internationally minded and acquire the “soft skills” needed to be successful in the 21st century.

In alignment with the International Baccalaureate, Morris Brandon Elementary and Atlanta Public Schools believe that the diversity of language within our community enriches us all. In order to ensure inclusion of all families within our community, “[we] must foster an environment in which parents and other caregivers have the opportunity to be active participants in the life of our schools, regardless of the language they speak at home” (Atlanta Public Schools, LEEB, §5, 2019).

**Mother Tongue Support**

The staff, leadership, and community of Morris Brandon Elementary acknowledge the importance of a student’s mother tongue as a way to promote the expression of personal identity and cultural heritage, international mindedness, intercultural awareness, and empathy.

In accordance with the Board policy of Atlanta Public Schools,

“[p]arents who speak a language other than English may request translation and interpretation services for school-related communications at any time. The district [Atlanta Public Schools] shall ensure that appropriate means of communication are established once it is known that a parent/guardian, for any reason, may not be able to understand written communications from school or oral communications made during conferences related to the student’s program, assessment, progress, or school activities” (Atlanta Public Schools, LEEB, §5, 2019).

**Theory and Practice of Language at Morris Brandon Elementary**

The role of language at Morris Brandon Elementary is to:

* ensure the delivery of transdisciplinary learning throughout the entire PYP Programme of Inquiry (POI);
* provide authentic inquiry-based language learning;
* help students to obtain and maintain fluency in their native and host language;
* support the development of literacy skills and an understanding and application of the conventions of English;
* support the development of literacy skills and an understanding and application of the conventions of a second language (Spanish, grades K-4, two classes per grade; French, grades 1-5, all classes except those taking Spanish);
* develop intercultural awareness and respect by celebrating and valuing cultures of the school and global community; and
* promote enjoyment and appreciation of language learning.

**Languages of Instruction**

The primary language of instruction at Morris Brandon Elementary is English (K-5). Spanish and French are additional languages taught. Spanish is taught in a multiliterate Dual Language Immersion model where approximately 50 students per grade (K-4; grade 5 to be added in 2021) spend half of their instructional day learning language, mathematics, and science in Spanish and language and social studies in English. French is taught to students in grades 3-5 for 3 days per week, 45 minutes per session under a proficiency model that utilizes the strategies of comprehensible input.

Approximately 7% of our student population (approximately 80 students) receives services through ESOL (English to Speakers of Other Languages). The goal of ESOL is to develop English proficiency, particularly through the acquisition of academic English through the domains of listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Two ESOL teachers collaborate with homeroom teachers to provide additional resources and strategies that promote the development of academic language and vocabulary, which in turn allows students to progress toward independent English proficiency and academic success.

Students are identified for ESOL based on a Home Language screener survey upon enrollment. For students who speak a language other than English, the WIDA Access Placement Test (W-APT) is administered in the areas of listening, speaking, reading, and/or writing. For students who qualify for ESOL services, students in K-3rd grades will receive 45 minutes of specialized daily instruction; students in grades 4-5 will receive 50 minutes of specialized daily instruction.

**Definitions** (IBO, 2014)

The IB language policy defines three groups of languages along with five levels of support that can be granted in a given language.

* **Working languages:** The languages that the school communicates with its stakeholders. The three working languages at Morris Brandon Elementary are English, Spanish (4% fluent, 20% enrolled in DLI program), and French (0.5% fluent, 80% enrolled in 45-minutes of French instruction three times each week).
* **Access languages:**Languages that the IB has identified as being of strategic importance to meet its access goals and objectives to develop a more inclusive and diverse IB community. For SY 2019-2020, the additional languages spoken by our student population include Tagalog (0.1%), Cantonese (0.2%), Slovak (0.3%), Korean (0.3%), Russian (0.5%), Swedish (0.1%), Thai (0.1%), Arabic (0.4%), Portuguese (0.1%), Punjabi (0.1%), Chinese (1.1%), Dutch (0.1%), Hindi (0.4%), and Turkish (0.1%). Additional languages spoken by the faculty include Spanish (25%), French (1%), Chinese (<1%), Creole (<1%), Greek (<1%), and Hebrew (<1%).
* **Internal working language:**English is the school’s internal working language, in which most operational and developmental activities take place. It is also the language of its governance, management, and academic committees.
* **Language of instruction:** The languages of instruction at Morris Brandon Elementary include English, Spanish, and French.
* **Response language:** Students who are in the Dual Language Immersion (DLI) program engage in internal and external assessments in English and Spanish. Students not enrolled in the DLI program, the internal and external assessments are predominantly in English with some French.
* **Language course:** All students are enrolled in an English course; students who are language learners, also receive English language support (ESOL). Students enrolled in the DLI program receive a 50/50 split between English and Spanish instruction. With the exception of students who need additional intervention in reading and/or math, students not enrolled in DLI are enrolled in a French course for 45 minutes three times per week under a proficiency model.

**Levels of Support for Languages**

* **Working Languages**

**Level 2**

At the start of SY 2020-2021, the following school-level documents will be available in all three working languages:

* + IB Learner Profile
  + Guides to programme implementation, including cross-programme and continuum documentation
  + Curriculum guides and teacher support materials
  + IB school-level policies
  + Mission / Vision / Values statements
  + Student and Family handbook
  + Standardized formative assessments

The following forms of communication are available only in English:

* + Public website
  + Standardized summative assessments
  + Professional development
  + Authorization and evaluation documentation
* **Access Languages**

**Level 3** (Arabic)

At the start of SY 2020-2021, the following school-level documents will be available to our Arabic-speaking population:

* + IB Learner Profile
  + Guides to programme implementation, including cross-programme and continuum documentation (upon family request)
  + IB school-level policies
  + Mission / Vision / Values statements
  + Student and Family handbook (upon family request)

**Level 4** (Turkish, Chinese)

At the start of SY 2020-2021, the following school-level documents will be available to our Turkish and Chinese-speaking population:

* + IB Learner Profile
  + Guides to programme implementation, including cross-programme and continuum documentation (upon family request)

**Level 5** (all other languages)

The following school-level documents are available to our Arabic-speaking population:

* + A bilingual glossary of PYP terminology will be provided upon request.

**Language Pedagogy**

Language instruction within the PYP at Morris Brandon Elementary includes all the necessary tools for effective language communication – reading, writing, listening, speaking, and viewing. These opportunities are embedded throughout the school-wide POI across all content areas in order to provide developmentally appropriate and authentic contexts for optimal language acquisition.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **READING** | **WRITING** | **LISTENING/SPEAKING/VIEWING** |
| **Print**   * Literature * Reading for information * Leveled-reading * Guided-reading * Vocabulary * Variety of reading materials in classroom and media center. * *Wit & Wisdom* ELA program by GreatMinds   **Phonemic Awareness**   * *Orton-Gillingham* approach to phonemic awareness * Rhymes * Poetry * Song * Literacy Centers * Fundations Phonics program * myLexia web-based resource   **Fluency/Vocabulary/Comprehension**   * Guided Reading * Leveled Reading * Read-aloud * Shared Reading * Comprehensible Input (French) | * Writer’s Workshop * Reflections on units of inquiry * Graphic organizers * Writing across the curriculum * Writing journals * *Wit & Wisdom* ELA program by GreatMinds | * Socratic Seminar * Role-play * Oral projects and presentations * Audio/Visual products * Music * Artwork * Guest speakers |

**Roles & Responsibilities**

Morris Brandon Elementary stakeholders are continually informed of updates to the IB programme standards through professional learning and community workshops. We are also committed to the IB programme standards and practices through the employment of a full-time PYP specialists, IB newsletters, and websites that relate to teaching and learning.

Leadership ensures that highly-qualified teachers are in place in each classroom of instruction. Specialized language teachers – French, Spanish, ESOL, and Media Specialists – will review the language policy to ensure its alignment to the PYP philosophy. All teachers are responsible for implementation of language instruction in their respective classrooms.

The head-of-school, PYP specialist, district program coordinator, and the Office of World Language are responsible for providing opportunities for teachers’ professional learning and assisting with ways to make communication accessible for every tongue.

**Language Policy Review**

The Language Policy will be formally reviewed, as needed, by Morris Brandon Elementary School’s staff and community stakeholders at least once each year in order to adapt to changing best practices, changes to the Primary Years Programme, and changes to the needs of our community. The effectiveness of this policy will be reflected in our assessment data and feedback from stakeholders. We welcome comments and recommendations on this policy at any time.

Developed DRAFT: 5, March 2020

Final: 1 May, 2020